GENDER EQUALITY AND POST CRISIS TRANSFORMATION: CASE OF DAMASCUS CITY

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ABSTRACT

Urbanization spurs several social issues like inequalities, exclusion, and segregation. Tacked with a humanitarian crisis, societies face even more problems. Additionally, discriminatory laws and social norms have led women to suffer disproportionately in cities. As the Syrian crisis enters its tenth year, the aftermath is worse for women, girls, and millions of people inside the country and refugees around the world. Hence, this research was made to understand the current urban challenges facing the social conditions of Syrian women living in Damascus, and develop a set of guidelines to foster the integration of women's needs and challenges in future urban policies.

The study was initialized with the interpretation of the social sustainability concept. A framework was created and later used in the analysis of the qualitative data. Furthermore, the interviews were made to identify urban issues and their effect on women. Followed by a survey, to have a better comprehension of how the interview results can reflect on a bigger population. Moreover, all the data was examined under a gender lens to highlight the existing disadvantages of women and provide a better gender-sensitive result. According to the finding of the study, enhancing the outskirt is essential as women living in the outskirts endure more in terms of transportation, services, and quality of the urban settings. Also, the quality of schools and the availability of day-cares should be enhanced as they hinder married women from accessing job opportunities. Lastly, it is important to adopt new strategies to reinforce the sense of belonging of younger women; which tend to suffer from a lack of attachment to their living places. The result outlines a guide to socially sustainable urban policies and post-crisis transformation that advocates gender equality in the context of Damascus city.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Post Crisis transformation, Social sustainability, Sustainability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Women and men experience and perceive cities in different ways so addressing cities as gender-neutral results in creating urban settings that do not deliver women's needs. Thus, sustainable development encourages taking into consideration women and men equally and ensures the full involvement of women in decision-making. Women's knowledge and collective action are central to finding, demonstrating, and building more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable pathways (UN Women, 2014, p:13). In conflicts such as the case of Syria, gender inequalities are dependent. Especially that "In times of war, gender equality is often perceived as being a second-order priority. Human rights violations are not seen as integral concerns and are pushed back by decision-makers" (Latif, 2016, p.3). Therefore, designing gender-responsive urban policies that take into consideration social sustainability in one hand and women's needs in the other; will not only pave the way toward building-up a coherent and harmonious society but will also ensure the well-being of the future generation. From this context, this research aims to set up a guideline that links sustainable development with gender equality in the context of urban policies and the post-crisis transformation process of Syrian cities, by focusing on the case of Damascus.

2. BACKGROUND OF CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development aims to deliver the needs of today without compromising the needs of the future. Environmental, economic, and social aspects form the three main pillars of sustainable development (Dempsey et al., 2009). However, the social aspect is the least researched and it did not get enough attention until the beginning of this millennium (Ghahramanpouri et al., 2013). Furthermore, according to Guy and Marvin (1999) to develop the research and practice of urban sustainability understanding the social dimension is a key element. Social sustainability is directly related to how the community affects its inhabitants in terms of well-being and overall quality of life now and in the future (Dixon and Woodcraft, 2013). Even though social sustainability is related to social factors (participation and services), physical factors (e.g. access to transportation) can impact the quality of life in cities. Even though social sustainability approaches may be different according to the place and time. However, the broad guidelines of social sustainability disciplines are common among most approaches.

Scholars have mentioned the factors in Figure 1 as the main factors that affect social sustainable urban settings discussed by theorists. The figure illustrates the wide breadth of related concepts and is suggestive of the close conceptual proximity between factors (Dempsey et al., 2009). These factors fall under two

main concepts that define urban social sustainability which are social equity and sustainability of the community (Dempsey et al., 2009).

2.1.1 Social equity

Social equity is linked with "social and environmental exclusion" and "equality of condition" (Dempsey et al., 2009). Equality of conditions focuses on the rights of people in everyday life like education, infrastructure, decent housing, and public spaces... etc.

While social exclusion includes racism and sexism in the local scale, or areas of deficiency with poor living conditions.

2.1.2 Sustainability of community

Sustainability of community is known as the "collective aspects of social life" and it is highly associated with the physical elements of the urban environment (Dempsey et al., 2009). The margin of the definition of sustainability of the community is wide. Social cohesion, social capital, social network, and sense of community and others (see Figure 1) are all interpretations of the concept. In short, sustainability of the community is related to how the society functions locally as one community and its ability to develop and flourish. According to Dempsey et al. (2009), sustainability of community can be classified under five main dimensions, which are associated with the urban design scale:

1- Social interaction/social networks:

Both concepts are primary factors to social sustainability, they reinforce the social relationships among community individuals. Even though the two concepts are interlinked. However, they can be distinguished separately. Social interaction is related to the basic process in the formation of both human nature and the social order as described by Wirth (1964). While, the social network is connected to the "social support systems" showing that the people we know and feel we can rely on can impact other sides of life, like feelings of safety and a sense of well-being (Dempsey et al., 2009, p.7). The physical factors of the city can deeply affect social networks and interactions among community residents.

2- Participation in collective groups: a positive, effective participatory dialogue is the foundation of any community. The urban environment and accessibility to facilities can shape the participatory behavior of individuals.

3- Community stability: a society that accommodates residents for the long-term is defined as a stable community.

4- Sense of place: The quality of the urban setting affects people's enjoyment of the neighborhood in which they live, which reflects the sense of belonging.

5- Safety and security: Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" describes safety as a basic human need. It is also an essential factor in social sustainability and is directly linked to urban settings.

Figure 1. Factors of social sustainability (Dempsey et al. 2009).

Non-physical factors	Predominantly physical factors
• Education and training • Social justice: inter- and intra-generational • Participation and local democracy • Health, quality of life and well-being • Social inclusion (and eradication of social exclusion) • Social capital • Community • Safety • Mixed tenure • Fair distribution of income • Social order • Social cohesion • Community cohesion (i.e. cohesion between and among different groups) • Social networks • Social interaction • Sense of community and belonging • Employment • Residential stability (vs turnover) • Active community organizations • Cultural traditions	• Urbanity • Attractive public realm • Decent housing • Local environmental quality and amenity • Accessibility (e.g. to local services and facilities/employment/ green space) • Sustainable urban design • Neighbourhood • Walkable neighbourhood: pedestrian friendly

To analyze the interview results, a framework was prepared to highlight and simplify the main concepts of social sustainability. The physical and non-physical factors mentioned in figure 1 were illustrated in figure 2 as a first of creating the integrated framework.
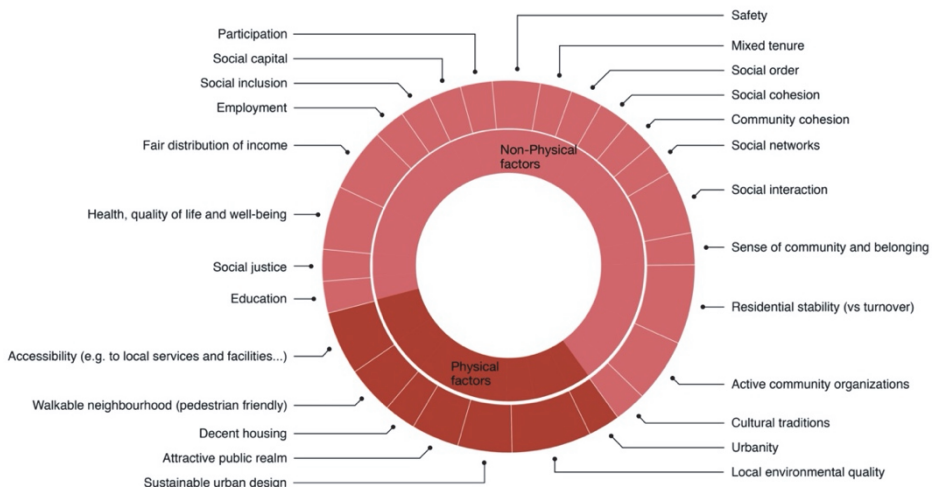

Figure 2. The physical and non-physical factors of social sustainability illustrated in a sunburst chart (the author).

Figure 3 reflects figure 1, the same factors of social sustainability were classified under the sustainability of the community, and social equity. This categorization is essential to grasp and simplify the wide range of social sustainability concept.
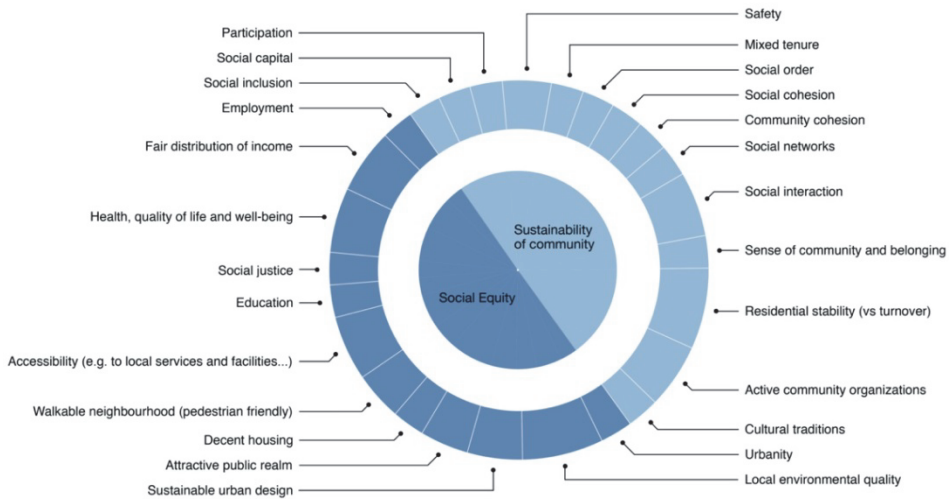

Figure 3. The social sustainability factors categorized under the two main domains of social sustainability (the author).

The two charts (figure 2 and 3) shows the categorization of social sustainability into two different ways, and according to the intersection of two charts, the final categorized factors are affecting the community in three main aspects. First, the built environment which represents the physical factors under the social equity domain. Second, the accessibility to services under the social equity domain whether the factors were physical or non-physical. Finally, the rest of the non-physical factors are under the sustainability of the community aspect, which can be considered as the third main aspect. Classifying the factors according to the mentioned three main aspects is an important step to facilitate coding the qualitative data and designing the quantitative survey. Also, it helps in identifying the overlapped factors. As a result, the framework in Figure 4, shows the integrated social sustainability factors that form a set of main aspects that enhances the quality of life if they were addressed in the right way.
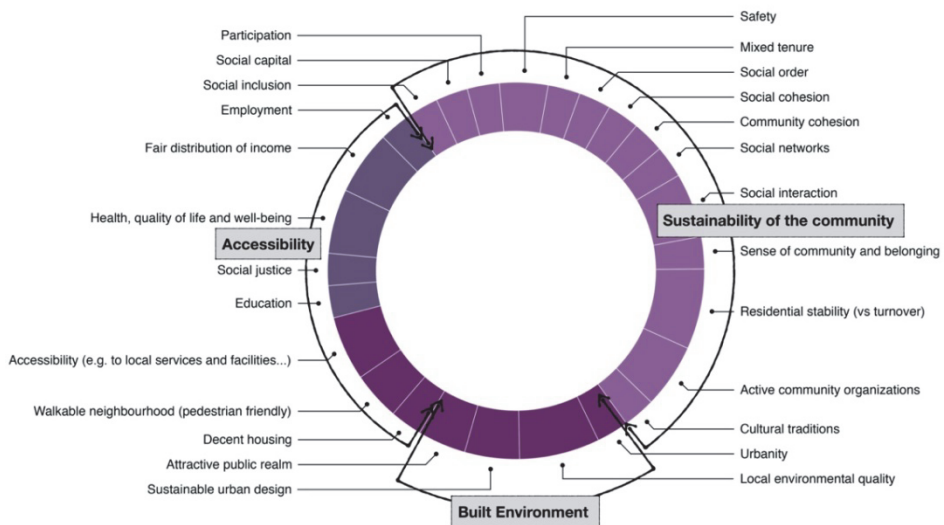
Figure 4. The proposed social sustainability framework.

2.2. Gender Equality

There are many attempts to implement social sustainability with urban policies in the last decades. And even though urban planning and design are usually considered gender-neutral, not designed for a specific sex, however, what gender-neutral usually prioritize is men's needs over women's (UN-Habitat, 2012). Gender is considered as a social identity which is not related to women only. Rather, it is concerned with the relationship between women and men and draws attention to the distribution of power and equality associated with gender identity (UN-Habitat, 2018). As long as the urban policy development strategies do not adopt gender equality as a key concept, the inclusiveness of cities will keep disadvantaging women, and limiting them from full participation in the different settings of cities. (UN-Habitat, 2018). Gender equality is the 5th goal of the UN sustainable development goals, and it is an essential pillar to building a sustainable, thriving, and just community.

The UN-Habitat has discussed some of the challenges that are hindering the implementation of gender equality in cities. Women are not only exposed to these challenges; however, they are still subjected to gender-based discrimination in their daily life. These challenges include lack of political voice, limited access to land and, housing which makes women more vulnerable in cases of domestic violence. Also, limited access to infrastructure and services as women have a hard time accessing safe and affordable transportation, and because of the bad livelihood as women are suffering from limited employment opportunities accompanied by low incomes, poor health, and school services.

In brief, if gender equality is not taking into consideration in the early recovery stage of damaged cities, the negative consequences will affect the whole community. By incorporating women's views and needs into the transformation policies of the design of cities, a just, balanced, and cohesive society can be achieved.

2.3. The Gender Profile of Syria

According to the UNHCR (2019), there are around 5.6 million refugees documented in neighboring countries and the number is expected to be higher because of undocumented refugees (Figure 5).
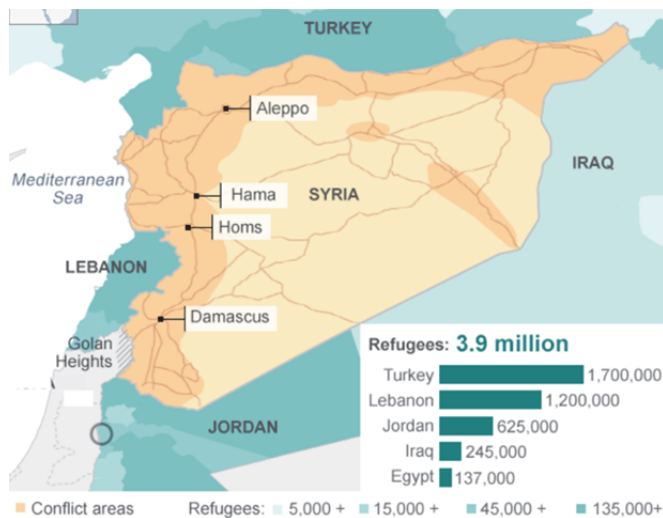

Figure 5. The refugee crisis in Syria (UNHCR, 2015).

 Also, there is around 6.6 million who immigrated internally which means around 40% of the population in total were forced to leave their home. Moreover, around 70% of Syria's current population needs humanitarian assistance according to the UN. The percentage of people living under extreme poverty (less than US$1.90 per day) went from 34% before the crisis to around 69% in 2017. And with no clear political solutions until today, Syrians continue to suffer and get displaced making Syria "the world's largest displacement crisis" in the century (Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2017). The women of Syria are in the middle of the conflict bearing the worst consequences from the decline of health services, violence, limited opportunities to education and many others. The negative standards of the society towards women also contributed to the exclusion of women in the social, economic, and political life of Syria (Challenges to Gender Equality in Syria, 2018).

The war impact even follows women refugees, resulting in many women suffering from the lack of adequate shelters among many other serious issues. During war times, human rights violations mostly are not perceived as primary concerns by decision-makers and gender equality becomes a second priority (Latif, 2016). It is hard to grasp precise data about gender-based violence since women tend to keep quiet about these incidents to escape society shaming. Yet, many organizations, such as Women Under Siege, have managed to document many cases (BTI, 2018). In some cases, even women refugees, who became without a guardian or financial support, were forced to have sex in exchange for receiving aid (IPPF, 2015). In general, women and children are the most vulnerable groups in war conditions. Since the beginning of the conflict, thousands of Syrian women have been either killed, raped, arrested, tortured, taken hostages, or even used as a human shield. That is why future studies need to take in consideration views of women at every stage of the recovery phase.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative, quantitative and the integration of both approaches in order to take advantage of both techniques. "Adopting both methodologies qualitative and quantitative can give a more powerful voice to women's experiences" (Hodgkin, 2008). This research started with in-depth interviews with 6 Syrian women to identify and understand their problems, and the framework was derived from the analysis of the interview data. Followed by a survey based on the framework to see how the qualitative results can be generalized over a broad-scale. This approach of starting with qualitative followed by quantitative is known as an exploratory sequential approach: qual→QUAN (Creswell, John W., 2014). Moreover, a gender lens was adopted (which is known as a transformative method) to interpret that data, as it can help women's voices be heard. According to Creswell (2014, p.38) "Transformative research provides a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness or advancing an agenda for change to improve their lives. It becomes a united voice for reform and change".
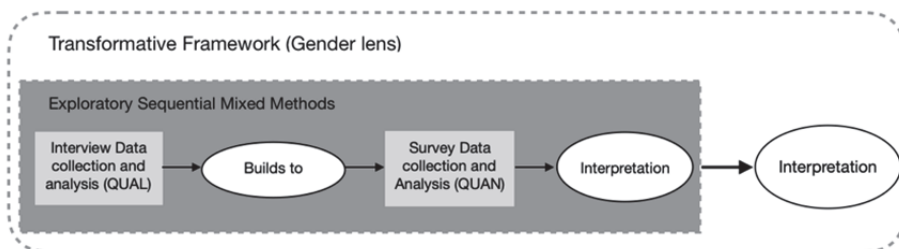

Figure 6. The adopted mixed method

3.1. Phase One: Qualitative Analysis of Interview Data

The interviews were with 6 women from different backgrounds, all the data was then classified and categorized while taking into consideration the framework related to social sustainability. The interview questions were asked were general questions, so interviewees can freely answer the questions without any guides. The first question was to explain the main challenges the interviewees face in their daily life in the city. The second question focused on women's expectations and hopes from future recovery policies that can enhance their living experience in the city. The participants took part individually over the telephone since they are all resident in Damascus or its countryside except for one person who was interviewed personally. Interviewees were informed that the purpose of the research was to explore how the city affects women in general. All interviews were recorded, and the interviews ranged in length from 10 to 25 minutes. Each one was later transcribed and used in the analysis of participants' responses.

4.1.3 Data analysis

The analysis for phase one served to establish a good grasp over the critical challenges that face women in their daily activities regarding the urban settings. The next step was using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach of constant comparisons between the data to formulate a theoretical framework. All the data was then classified and categorized while taking into consideration the literature review related to social sustainability.

First, the transcription text (database) was read to have overall information about the responses. Then, in each paragraph similar words and phrases were highlighted, and labels were generated. The result was divided into negative and positive according to the interviewee's experience. Phrases like: I feel there are many strangers(n4), Transportation is really bad(n1) or I can't sit alone in parks without a male with me, I don't feel safe(n5). were labeled negative. Phrases like: I don't see a problem in job opportunities(n4), I don't see any discrimination in work(n5), Services in the city center are good(n6) were labeled positive. The number (n) represents the number of the interviewee.

The second step was classifying negative and positive phrases under sub-categories according to their theme. These sub-categories were then classified under the categories derived from the social sustainability framework in figure 4. Therefore, figure 7 was created to illustrate the process which includes the sub-categories themes mentioned from the interviews under the main categories mentioned in social sustainability.
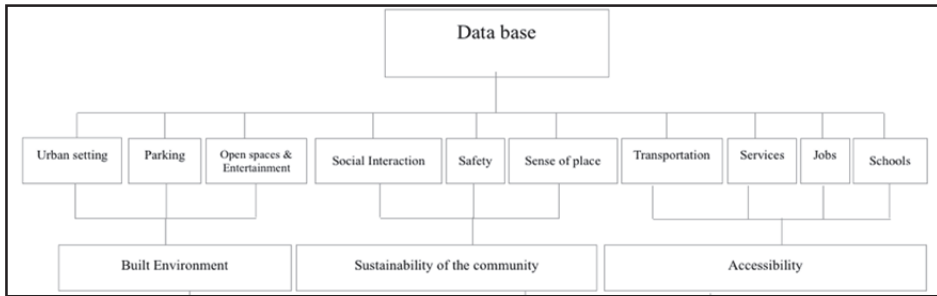
Figure 7. The proposed social sustainability framework.

Also, Table 1 was created according to the responses of the interviewees and was categorized into the main dimensions. Table 1 represents the decoded interview results as follows:

Table 1. The results of interviews.

	Sub-Categories	First-interviewee	Second-interviewee	Third-interviewee	Fourth-interviewee	Fifth-interviewee	Sixth-interviewee
General Information	Age	44	39	26	27	26	56
	Education	HS	BA	BA	BA	BA	PHD
	Work	Not working	Working	Working	Working	Working	Working
	Marital Status	Married	Married	not-Married	not-Married	not-Married	Married
	Children	3 children	3 children	–	–	–	4 children
	Living place	Rural Area	Rural Area	Rural Area	Rural Area	City Centre	City Centre
Main themes							
Accessibility	Schools	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative		(-) Negative	
	Jobs	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(+) Positive	(+) Positive	
	Services	(-) Negative		(-) Negative			(+) Positive
	Transportation	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative
Sustainability of community	Sense of Place	(-) Negative		(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	
	Safety	(-) Negative		(-) Negative		(-) Negative	(-) Negative
	Social Interactions	(-) Negative			(-) Negative	(-) Negative	
Built environment	Open Spaces & Entertainment			(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative	
	Parking				(-) Negative	(-) Negative	(-) Negative
	Urban Settings			(-) Negative	(-) Negative		(-) Negative

- Accessibility: The interviewed women expressed their difficulties in accessing different services in the city. A major challenge to the daily life of women was the transportation services, as women of the interview stated they struggle daily from limited transportation and the bad quality of the transportation means. Even though the accessibility to transportation is presenting more challenges to job opportunities, yet still the young females are having more advantages in finding jobs, because of the current unstable situation of men. On the other hand, accessing leadership jobs for women or opening a private business is defiantly challenging. Also, it is not as easy for married women with children to find jobs due to the responsibility of the house and children. The lack of day-cares and good schools is also considered a limitation to finding jobs for women

- Sustainability of the community: The sense of belonging was negative for both young women in general and women who immigrated internally. The feeling of safety was also a key issue that was mentioned. Women reported that they feel unsafe while using public transportation or while they are driving their cars at certain times especially in roads connecting between the city center and the outskirts. The feeling of unsafe is also affecting the women's usage of open space and some narrow streets. Another problem that was brought up by the interviewees is the lack of social interaction with their neighbors.

- Built environment: Many problems were mentioned about the built environment. Starting with streets, the lighting was mentioned negatively, and the infrastructure and the sidewalks were also reported in bad conditions. Some areas were described not clean and there were not enough trash cans. Also, the buildings are too close to each other in some areas which created a lack of privacy. The lack of limited green areas was also a big issue.

3.2 Phase Two: Quantitative Analysis of the Survey Data

The survey was based on the framework that was derived from the interviews. The respondents were asked about the issues they are facing in their daily life in the city, which measures the subjective appraisal for the city. Furthermore, the questionnaire was conducted in the Arabic language and was made using Google surveys and was distributed online through social media platforms. A brief explanation was written before the questions, and it started with a general information section that was added to understand the population background. Table 2 represents the information of the survey sampling.

It included 34 questions in total and there were three main dimensions other than the general information section. Accessibility, the sustainability of the community and the built environment were all topics derived from the interview

results. The questionnaire addressed a wide range of issues but the analyzed results will focus on the gender-sensitive differences which are derived from the answers of both females and males and demographic differences. Respondents were asked to scale different factors related to their experience in the city. The data were subjected to the independent-samples T-test to compare the mean values between females and males and the questions included closed-ended questions, multiple choices, Likert-type scales, and one open-ended question.

Table 2. The survey respondents.

Total Responses		358		
Gender		Women 271		Men 87
Marital Status		Married 185		Not-Married 173
Age groups	15-18 18	18-30 186	30-50 121	50> 32
Children		Yes 161		No 197
Number of children	1 29	2 54	3 34	4> 45
Working		Yes 199		No 159
Educational Level	Elementary school 0	Highschool degree 76	Undergraduate degree 214	Graduate Degree 68
Living Place		Damascus City enter 257		Damascus countryside 101
Still living in Syria		Yes 262		No 96

Examining the results of the survey shows that there are not many differences between men and women and the urban environment is threatening the quality of life for both women and men as the survey results show. However, women are struggling more. The limitation of job opportunities and the transportation issue is affecting the ability of women to participate in the workforce, and the responsibilities of the house and children are presenting married mothers with a lot more difficulties in the job sector, from finding the right job to starting a private business. Yet, women still have a more positive view towards the accessibility to services and quality of schools as the T-sample results (Table 3).

Also, women are feeling insecure in public spaces and transportation, thus the urban settings are isolating women and weakening their interaction with the networks. This problem might be aggravated as many women stated they feel there are many new strangers in their familiar urban cities (Figure 8).

Table 3. T test results comparison between females and males.

|	Variables	Female N: 271		Male N: 87		F	t	Sig.
		Mean	S. D	Mean	S.D			
1	Accessibility to transportation	2.24	0.923	2.22	0.92	0.019	0.221	0.825
2	Availability of basic services	**3.03**	1.012	2.63	1.013	0.825	3.214	0.001
3	Finding a suitable job	2.18	1.054	2.21	1.132	0.275	-0.197	0.844
4	Leadership job for women	2.26	1.095	2.45	1.065	0.193	-1.417	0.157
5	Accessibility to schools/day care	3.48	1.081	3.41	1.095	0.001	0.521	0.603
6	The quality of the schools or day care	**2.83**	1.089	2.52	0.975	0.307	2.391	0.017
7	Sense of belonging	3.35	1.36	3.33	1.37	0.051	0.103	0.918
8	Interaction with neighbours	2.9	1.342	3.13	1.246	1.877	-1.39	0.165
9	Participation in community	1.65	0.926	1.79	0.904	0.116	-1.266	0.206
10	Safety	2.85	1.04	2.78	1.146	2.762	0.539	0.59
11	The quality of open spaces or parks	2.09	1.029	2.08	0.985	0.681	0.089	0.929
12	The quality urban settings	2.3	0.994	2.18	0.983	1.213	0.941	0.347
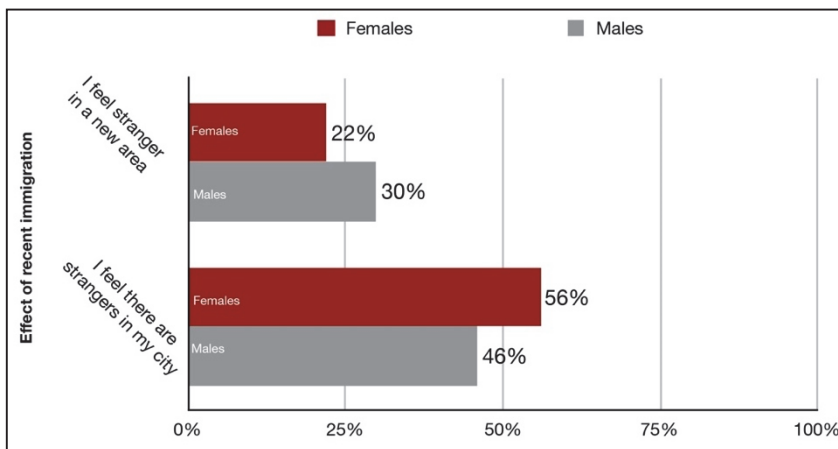
Figure 8. Frequency analysis comparison between females and males in terms of social sustainability.

Moreover, women with children consider it harder to find a job or have a leadership job for females and there is a significant difference compared to women without children (Table 4). On the other hand, the results reflect that women with children have more sense of belonging and participation with neighbors.

Table 4. T test results comparison between married and single women.

	Variables	Married N: 143		Not-Married N: 128		F	t	Sig.
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
1	Accessibility to transportation	2.30	0.979	2.18	0.855	4.078	1.078	0.282
2	Availability of basic services	3.04	1.027	3.02	1.000	0.006	0.150	0.881
3	Finding a suitable job	2.00	1.035	**2.38**	1.043	0.765	-3.029	0.003
4	Leadership job for women	2.08	1.049	**2.46**	1.115	1.656	-2.921	0.004
5	Accessibility to schools/day care	3.37	1.143	**3.61**	0.998	2.108	-1.822	0.070
6	The quality of the schools or day care	2.86	1.136	2.80	1.038	0.888	0.477	0.634
7	Sense of belonging	**3.57**	1.340	3.11	1.347	0.072	2.796	0.006
8	Interaction with neighbours	3.00	1.332	2.79	1.350	1.082	1.293	0.197
9	Participation in community	1.61	0.920	1.70	0.935	0.099	-0.771	0.442
10	Safety	2.80	1.065	2.91	1.012	1.063	-0.923	0.357
11	The quality of open spaces or parks	2.15	1.050	2.02	1.004	2.080	1.038	0.300
12	The quality urban settings	2.31	0.959	2.29	1.036	1.237	0.154	0.878

The limited leisure activities from outdoor activities to entertainment presented a requirement for the young generation. Participation in the community also was one of the major issues for women in the survey results. When women do not participate enough in society, their voices will not be heard and their needs will not be addressed, which leads to more exclusion of women. Moreover, it is also noticeable that memory towards the city had a strong impact on the people who left the country, as they did have a positive view of social interaction. However, their view regarding the current quality of life and the current situation was more negative than the people who are still in the city (Figure 9).
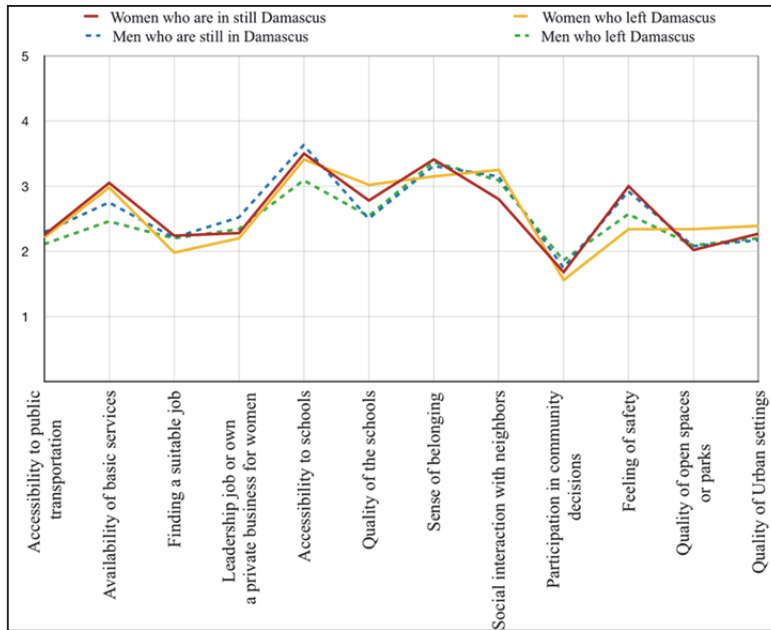
**Figure 9. Mean values comparison according living inside
or outside the country.**

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In brief, even though the discussed issue affects the whole population, women are more vulnerable in the current situation in Syria. The issue stated by the interviewed women defiantly apply to the larger survey population, and the results of this survey help to provide a simple guide to help raise the voices of these women, especially since there are very limited clear policy-making tools which are related directly to the problems of the Syrian women. Therefore, urban planners and designers can use this guideline to get a better look at the struggles of the women and help them propose more insightful solutions to fulfill the needs and expectations of Syrian women. In the context of this study, for the future post-crisis policies to adopt a sustainable development framework that promotes gender equality, the following points should be highly considered:

1- Raising the awareness of gender equality in the context of sustainable deve-lopment is crucial. Also, programs and workshops at the local and national scale that educate and gather data about the gender-sensitive must be done.

2- Providing better access to job opportunities by increasing the number and the quality of schools, and enhancing the transportation network to make the mobility of women more efficient. Applying a mixed-use design to the urban environment can be considered a solution since it can offer jobs close to the

residency of women. Thus, providing more day-cares and schools to support married women in finding suitable jobs is essential.

3- Paying more attention to the outskirts of the city, especially in terms of transportation means and the availability of services and quality of the urban settings.

4- Strengthening the sense of belonging for women by integrating more green spaces in the city and providing more open door and entertainment activities to enhance the feeling of attachment for young women, and taking better care of street lights to give a safer night-experience.

5- Upgrading open public spaces to be more welcoming and inclusive, so they can embrace women more safely, and enhance their access to the public spaces.

6- Updating the transportation networks and the means to offer more efficient accessible, affordable and safe public transportation.

7- Providing the opportunity for women to be a key player in the design and planning processes of the city will help to ensure designing cities that embrace gender perspective and promote equality. Also, raising the voice of women in local societies and involving them more in the action-making to increase their participation in the city.

8- To help the reattachment of Syrian people who left their country, it is important to strengthen their connection with the city. This can be done by enriching the identity of Damascus city itself for example. Renovating and enhancing famous landmarks and open spaces especially the ones with old cultural heritage through good social urban regeneration is probably going to save the Syrian identity. Also, involving Syrian people including the displaced and immigrated ones with the regeneration process can deeply help with their reattachment to their cities and their country.

5. CONCLUSION

Women have been dealing with inequality issues within the urban cities for many years even in our modern days. With all the negative impacts of urbanization, they are the most affected and the most vulnerable ones. Yet, in the case of a 10-years Syrian humanitarian crisis, women were left even more vulnerable and struggling furthermore in the urban environments to fulfill their daily needs. Thus, the recovery policies must take into consideration the needs of women to achieve a secure, equitable and welcoming community. A well-designed socially sustainable policies will not only enhance the quality of life for its residents, but it will also deepen gender equality and will empower women. Hence, gathering the efforts of policy-makers, urban planners and designers to adopt plans and programs

that prioritize the women's needs, can provide answers to the main issues and help implement social sustainability.

It is also important to mention the limitation of this study which may turn into opportunities for future research. The size of the sampling in qualitative and quantitative parts might not be enough to reflect the whole population. The different sample size between female and male in the quantitative stage is also considered a limitation. Most importantly, the study did not shed the light directly on the voices of women who are living in the most vulnerable areas of Damascus and its countryside because of the difficulty of reach in the current conflict. Future studies can overcome these challenges by including larger samples which explore how the urban patterns and housing are affecting women. In conclusion, this framework of post-crisis urban regeneration policies may open the door to redesigning new equitable urban schemes that welcome women, and offer new solutions to their challenges in the strive of a city, which advocates gender equality and sustainable development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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